UNITED
NATIONS

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Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/25602
15 April 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 14 APRIL 1993 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit herewith some information concerning the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and the latest offensive conducted by the Armenian armed forces in the Kelbajar and Fizuli regions of Azerbaijan. The reports by independent correspondents and news agencies indicate the direct involvement of Armenia in the conflict, consistently denied by the Armenian officials in order to conceal the real causes of the war - the territorial claims of Armenia in Azerbaijan.

The Inter-Press Service (by John Roberts, 8 April 1993, Thursday) reported: "Armenia is making territorial gains on the battlefield in its war against Azerbaijan." "Armenia has been fighting for five years to take Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly ethnic Armenian region in Azerbaijan" (The Plain Dealer (Cleveland), 10 April 1993). "The Armenian troops pounded towns and villages in southwestern Azerbaijan along the border with Iran, and the western town of Kelbajar" (Chicago Tribune, 10 April 1993).

> "The conflict between the two former Soviet republics also threatens Nakhichevan, a non-contiguous Azerbaijani enclave surrounded by Armenia, Iran and Turkey. In the latest phase of its military campaign, Armenian forces have launched a new offensive in southwestern Azerbaijan centred around the town of Fizuli. Capturing Fizuli would be a major step in cutting off Nakhichevan from the rest of Azerbaijan and would strengthen Armenia's control over the land it opened in May 1992 with Nagorno-Karabakh" (The Associated Press, 11 April 1993).

The Armenian offensive caused a new flow of refugees and a high rate of casualties among the civilian population of the occupied territories of Azerbaijan.

> "The steady stream of people - on foot and by car and truckload - follows a major Armenian offensive, culminating with the capture of a huge chunk of Azerbaijan territory in the ongoing war ... Over the weekend, children stumbled blindly behind their parents. For many it had been a hike of two or three days ... One image in particular stuck in the mind - a woman clutching a tiny black lamb. On her face were no tears or panic, just sheer exhaustion. 'I've left my children behind', she said, 'I had no

time to find them ...' Some of those who fled spoke of Armenian Grad missiles and heavy artillery landing in Kelbajar or along the escape route. Others from villages around the town claimed Armenian soldiers had killed women and children. These are familiar accusations in the post-Soviet Caucasus, reminiscent of a massacre of hundreds of Azeri civilians by Armenian fighters at the village of Khojali in Nagorno-Karabakh a year ago. Between 40,000 and 60,000 people lived in the Kelbajar region of Azerbaijan. Most of those have escaped but up to 5,000 are thought to be trapped behind Armenian lines. For any men left behind the prospects are bleak. This is a war in which prisoners are rarely taken." (Inter-Press Service, 7 April 1993)

"A spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that refugees from the Kelbajar region were arriving in northern Azerbaijan at a rate of some 7,700 every day", Swiss Radio International, Berne, reported (in English, 1700 GMT, 6 April 1993). "Many of them were women and children and many were suffering from frostbite. The UNHCR said that almost 30,000 people were still trapped in Armenian-held villages in the Kelbajar region".

"But those who had made it through the treacherous snow-covered mountain passes described horrific conditions, saying children were dying by the dozens, which had [led] many mothers to commit suicide in despair, according to UNHCR spokeswoman Marie Okabe." (Agence France-Presse, 8 April 1993)

Another offensive by Armenian armed forces in the direction of Fizuli also caused a new flow of refugees. "Armenian forces, backed by artillery, were advancing yesterday on Fizuli, which is only 18 miles of the Iranian border. As the fighting intensifies in southern Azerbaijan, tens of thousands of refugees are fleeing Armenian advances in the west." (The Daily Telegraph, 12 April 1993)

"Fierce battles in western and south-western Azerbaijan are continuing and 20 per cent of this republic's territory has been occupied", the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran reported (Tehran, 0330 GMT, 8 April 1993). "Since Armenia's offensive on Kelbajar early last week, the war has escalated. After occupying Kelbajar, Armenian soldiers concentrated their attacks on Fizuli, Kubatli and Gyanja. By opening new fronts on Azerbaijani territory, Armenia is intensifying the war. This could prove to be extremely serious. The recent attacks by Armenia are overt aggression and violate Azerbaijan's national sovereignty."

In conclusion, I should like to draw your attention to the fact that many independent correspondents agree that Armenia is unlikely to comply with the 6 April statement by the President of the United Nations Security Council (S/25539). A Chicago Tribune (10 April 1993) article reported that "Armenia ignored a United Nations Security Council statement denouncing its military push in the region." Agence France-Presse, quoting ITAR-TASS, also reported on 8 April 1993: "Armenian Acting Defence Minister Vazgen Manukian meanwhile said Karabagh forces would not pull out of occupied territories."

I hope these facts will be helpful to the Security Council in order to understand the essence of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict.

I would highly appreciate it if this letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hassan A. HASSANOV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative